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The Case in Favor of US Nuclear Weapons

ROBERT G. SPULAK, JR.

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As America searches for meaningful diplomatic and military policies to protect and promote its interests in the post-Cold War world, there are essentially two poles of opinion with regard to nuclear weapons. First, there is the post-Cold War status quo, represented by the Clinton Administration's Nuclear Posture Review, conducted in 1993-94, which recommended few and minor changes from Bush Administration policies. And, second, there is an earnest attempt to delegitimize nuclear weapons by minimizing their role, their numbers, and their importance, spreading a kind of nuclear stigma. Far from actually settling the United States' long-term future nuclear policy, the Nuclear Posture Review was greeted with disappointment by those who had hoped to influence US nuclear policy in the latter direction.[1]

The policies formulated under the Nuclear Posture Review were presented as a hedge against three concerns: the small but real danger that reform in Russia might fail and a new nuclear-armed government might arise, hostile to the United States; the slow pace of Russia's overall drawdown of nuclear weapons compared to that of the United States; and the security of nuclear components and materials in the nuclear nations of the former Soviet Union.[2] These concerns about an uncertain future, and about the Cold War legacy of 25,000 Russian nuclear weapons, led those engaged in the Nuclear Posture Review to recommend that the United States retain flexibility by maintaining the portions of the defense industrial base unique to nuclear weapons, ensuring sound stewardship for the nuclear stockpile, and ensuring the ability to reconstitute the nuclear forces that are drawn down.

Among proponents of nuclear stigma, there is an overarching presumption that it would be a good thing if the world could be made free of nuclear weapons, including our own. In contrast to the cautious recommendations of the Nuclear Posture Review, policies of stigmatizing nuclear weapons are seen to be positive measures that can approach the ideal of a nuclear-free world, despite our inability to put the genie back in the bottle. These pejorative perceptions of nuclear weapons, should they prevail, would represent a shift in the attitudes of policymakers. Whereas most were once convinced of the necessity of nuclear weapons to form the bedrock of strategic deterrence and to counter the conventional might of the Warsaw Pact, the nuclear stigma philosophy is grounded in an optimistic academic debate about nuclear weapons in a less threatening world.

The purpose of this article is to point out that the nuclear stigma philosophy lacks careful consideration of both the risks *and* benefits associated with nuclear weapons. In fact, the true risks of nuclear weapons seem to be obscured at the same time that the benefits are assumed to have all but disappeared. Any policy made without full recognition of these risks and benefits is likely to have some serious unintended consequences.

Assessing Nuclear Danger

Nuclear stigma is an attempt to deal with the dangers associated with nuclear weapons. And indeed, there are many such dangers: danger of all-out nuclear war, danger of unauthorized use, danger of loss of US power relative to proliferating nations, danger of nuclear use by an irresponsible nuclear state, danger of accidental detonation. Although these and other dangers vary widely in consequences, likelihood, and many other characteristics, discussions of "reducing nuclear danger" tend to gather some or all of them under one heading and attempt to characterize them collectively.[3] The policy recommendations to counter them usually include: sanctioning nuclear deterrence only against nuclear attack on the United States; no reliance on nuclear weapons for international political purposes; elimination of extended deterrence; an end to fissile material production; a comprehensive test ban; no strategic defense (tactical missile defenses may be okay); much smaller weapon stockpiles and deployments; and no first use. Authors typically appeal to the power of international institutions to guarantee security and to reduce and eventually

eliminate the need for nuclear weapons.

Some of these recommendations may be good, some may be bad, and some may be irrelevant to the actual dangers of nuclear weapons. For example, although it is now unnecessary for the United States to produce more weapons-grade fissile material, it is hard to make the case that the positive effect of a US fissile material production cutoff or a comprehensive test ban is much more than symbolic or economic. Many of the recommendations to "reduce nuclear danger" actually could work at cross purposes. One of the most worrisome proposals--for a minimal US strategic stockpile--could actually interfere with nonproliferation[4] by withdrawing extended deterrence from nuclear-capable allies who might then be motivated to develop their own nuclear deterrents. And although it's probably a minor consideration, a comprehensive test ban might even interfere with the ability of existing or new nuclear states to improve the safety of their weapons, increasing the likelihood of accidental detonation.

Insistence on minimizing the numbers of nuclear weapons provides a good illustration of the conceptual and analytical problems related to stigmatizing nuclear weapons. Reducing the numbers of weapons might reduce the chances of nuclear war and improve the overall safety and security of our nuclear arsenal--but then again, it might not. Deterrence of war is one of the benefits of nuclear weapons discussed below; for now it is enough to assert that actions that undermine the credibility of our deterrent may make nuclear war more, rather than less, likely in the long run. Many of the other risks associated with nuclear weapons depend upon such aspects as the details of individual weapon designs, the security of the facilities where they are stored, the operational requirements of their delivery systems, and the design and integrity of the nuclear command and control system. If careful attention is not paid to all of these factors, reducing the numbers will not necessarily reduce the real dangers associated with nuclear weapons. In fact, an evident lack of interest in these kinds of nuclear issues at the highest levels in the US government could produce consequences far more important--and far more dangerous--than the number of weapons or the amount of nuclear material the United States possesses.

Further, a minimal stockpile, minimal deterrence, or a doctrine of defensive last resort intended to deter only the use of nuclear weapons is not enough. In any war between major powers there is too great a possibility of unprecedented, virtually terminal, devastation to civilization and mankind. The existence of nuclear weapons creates the risk of catastrophe, but it also creates the only way to ameliorate that risk by minimizing the possibility of war between the major powers. Nuclear weapons have this dual nature: they are the only possible solution to the problem they pose.[5]

Attempting to stigmatize nuclear weapons assigns a "nuclear danger" to our own weapons and activities on a par with (or, when it comes to first use, greater than) the dangers we face from the nuclear weapons of our potential enemies. For example, although there is no threat that the United States will become a proliferating nation (since it already has nuclear weapons), the government has offered to place US fissile material under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The proponents of international supervision of US fissile material, or other cooperative measures, will argue that the purpose is not to prevent the misuse of US resources, but to set an example for other nations to make it easier to implement a regime that will help to lessen the chance of the misuse of their resources. However, there is a clear implication that the trust that is missing when considering our own institutions is applied instead, by some, to the notion that the world has become a safe place and that international institutions can guarantee our security. The negative reactions of the public and Congress to placing US troops under United Nations command and allowing other nations in a coalition or potential coalition to dictate US policy (with regard to the former Yugoslavia, for example) are indicators why this transfer of trust may be unrealistic. The United States can use international tools to promote peace, but cannot rely on them as it would rely on its own resources. The US nuclear arsenal is our ultimate safeguard against the failure of those cooperative tools.

The policy of containment and strategies of deterrence, which depended upon a large and diverse nuclear stockpile, served the United States well for more than 40 years. New policies developed to adapt to the end of the Cold War may also have to last through good times and bad. Whatever strategic arsenal we construct and whatever policies for using this arsenal we develop may have to serve not only for a time of reduced threats, but for future crises when the existence of the United States may be threatened. We may be stuck with this arsenal, whether constructed carefully or by default through minimization, and these policies, whether developed carefully or by default through stigmatization.

A senior Administration official expressed this view:

The United States is building down its nuclear weapons deployments and modifying related command, control, and intelligence capabilities in response to budgetary and political pressures. It is not clear that what remains is a coherent totality, after the work of the "termites." Elements have been "thrown overboard" without a clear plan. . . . The [Nuclear Posture] Review must go beyond scenarios to justify the arsenal . . . because there are no obvious scenarios that would suffice. It must also take into account that it will cast a "20-year shadow" in terms of technology development, training, [and] decisions affecting the nuclear industrial base.[6]

The essence of nuclear stigma is the elimination, minimization, or stigmatization of nuclear weapons, their infrastructure, and the policies for their management, presumably leaving the minimum possible residual to contribute to "danger." In the game of chess, when one contemplates a sequence of moves that involves capturing or exchanging pieces, one always keeps in mind the maxim that "it isn't what you remove from the board that is important, but rather what remains." We should decide which of the benefits of nuclear weapons are vital or important for the United States and thoughtfully assess what is necessary to provide these benefits, including the ability to manage diverse risks far into the future.

The Benefits of Nuclear Weapons

Since the beginning of the nuclear era, there has been great discussion and debate about the risks and benefits of nuclear weapons. It is not my purpose to recreate that debate here, nor even to present a complete treatment of all the alleged benefits of US nuclear weapons. It is necessary, however, to summarize briefly the principal arguments in favor of US nuclear arms, since the proponents of nuclear stigmatization almost totally ignore them.

There are some who may be uncomfortable with ascribing benefits to weapons of mass destruction. However, these are not simply benefits devoid of risks. There is, in fact, a competition of "alternate risks": the risks of various kinds that arise from having nuclear weapons and the equally serious spectrum of risks that would result from not having nuclear weapons. Possession of nuclear weapons creates benefits that can help to offset the risks of not having them.

Some argue that because of the collapse of the Soviet Union we cannot use history as any guide to the benefits of nuclear weapons.[7] However, with the end of the Cold War neither the nature of the risks nor the nature of the benefits has changed in any fundamental manner. The nature of the benefits of nuclear weapons depends on the characteristics of the weapons themselves and on the need of the United States to have the capability to use force and the threat of force to protect our interests in a world where other nations will always have nuclear weapons. Some very important risks, such as the immediate risk of large-scale nuclear war, have indisputably declined in magnitude, at least for a time. The balance between risks and benefits has shifted, allowing the changes that have already been implemented in US nuclear posture, such as the withdrawal of most tactical weapons from Europe, the elimination of aircraft standing alert, and the elimination of tactical weapons on US ships. But it does not follow that with the end of the Cold War the benefits of nuclear weapons have therefore disappeared and that the United States has no need to have the capability to use or threaten force to protect our interests. Before proceeding with truly revolutionary changes in nuclear policy, any formulation should carefully balance both the risks *and* the benefits of nuclear weapons.

Possession of nuclear weapons by the United States has historically been very useful (even, some would say, vital to the preservation of freedom in the world). Nuclear weapons are arguably the major reason why the second 45 years of the 20th century did not witness the massive devastation of the world wars of the first 45 years. "The immense power of nuclear weapons removed, long ago, any rational basis for a potential adversary believing that a major war could be fought in Europe and won. . . . The value of nuclear weapons in such circumstances lies not in classical concepts of war-fighting or war-winning, nor just in deterring the use of nuclear weapons in an adversary, but in actually preventing war." [8]

Even those who emphasize other aspects of the historical superpower standoff must include nuclear deterrence high on the list of factors. Nuclear deterrence does not ensure peace, but, short of nuclear war, places a limit on the level of violence. In fact, among great powers the nuclear era has been a most peaceful time. Nuclear weapons appear to have ended the terrible era of ever-more-devastating total war and substituted a relatively less-destructive era of limited war. It was largely the United States' nuclear deterrent that prevented the Soviet Union from realizing the expansionist

ambitions it proclaimed to be its obligation as the vanguard of world communism.

Nuclear weapons are uniquely effective for deterrence because they are enormously destructive and can be delivered in swift retaliation. No other military capability can duplicate the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence. There have been assertions that advanced, precision-guided, conventional weapons can perform the strategic missions of nuclear weapons, but careful analysis shows this idea to be without merit.[9] Our nuclear arsenal is *strategically sufficient*: it can destroy the sources of an enemy's economic, political, and military power. Precision conventional weapons cannot. In addition, for effective deterrence, the image of a single aircraft bunker in the cross hairs of a guided bomb is no match for the evocative image of a mushroom cloud. If we pretend that conventional weapons could be strategically sufficient, we allow the credibility of our nuclear deterrent to be damaged.

The need for nuclear deterrence will not disappear. There are still powerful nations in the world which are potential adversaries, both immediate and future. The interests of these other nations will, at times, be in conflict with the interests of the United States. It is inevitable that another great power or a coalition of powers will arise to oppose the hegemony of the United States. Although the Cold War is over, Russia still has the capability to destroy the United States; the strong showing of the nationalists and communists in the Russian elections, the obvious failure of reforms, the desire of Russia to be recognized as a great power, and replacement of the reformers in the Russian government with officials from the communist era have refocused our concerns on this point. In a few years Japan, a Western European state, or China could pose a strategic threat to our broad security interests; China is rapidly modernizing its arsenal and could soon be a strategic nuclear threat. Since we will be cautious about attacking any nuclear power with conventional forces, it will be difficult to deter even smaller nuclear powers such as North Korea, Iran, or Iraq if our nuclear threat to them is not credible.

Credibility is important for deterrence because the conditions under which the United States would actually use nuclear weapons, and therefore the conditions under which nuclear deterrence even exists, depend on limitations we place on ourselves. Credibility has been one of the most important aspects of nuclear policy from the beginning.[10] For example, the lack of credibility of the US policy of massive retaliation led to the more limited US doctrines that were then developed. The development of warfighting capabilities as a contribution to deterrence was based on the need to demonstrate that there was a likelihood that nuclear weapons would actually be used. In addition, French perceptions of the lack of credibility of the American nuclear guarantee led directly to the *force de frappe*. (Detargeting US and Russian ICBMs would not have been acceptable if these weapons could not be retargeted quickly, because the lack of verifiability would undermine the credibility of the ICBM forces.) Minimizing and stigmatizing our nuclear weapons can create a self-imposed taboo with respect to even nuclear adversaries, thereby delegitimizing deterrence and inviting threats to our interests.

This self-injury to our nuclear deterrence is not the delegitimization of all nuclear weapons that the proponents of nuclear stigma hope for. It is neither reciprocal with our potential enemies nor permanent, even for ourselves.

Credible nuclear deterrence is robust, not delicate. Policies and actions that establish credibility couple with our nuclear arsenal to create the possibility that in a war with the United States an enemy may face a risk of annihilation. A potential enemy need not even be very rational to be deterred from actions that ensure his own destruction. (This is not to argue for belligerence; we can keep the threshold for nuclear use high without undermining credibility.) This creates extreme caution in the behavior of other states if they wish to threaten vital US security interests, and it substantially reduces the likelihood of miscalculation.

Extended deterrence has been a cornerstone of both containment and nonproliferation. For example, NATO served to extend the strategic commitment of the United States, including nuclear deterrence, to our European allies. Security alliances also have discouraged some nations from developing their own nuclear capabilities by assuring them of protection under the US nuclear umbrella. A policy intended to stigmatize or minimize nuclear weapons can weaken nonproliferation and destabilize the security situation of our allies. As noted earlier, the lack of US nuclear credibility led to an independent French nuclear force. Japan is another nuclear-capable ally we could place at risk if we allow the credibility of our nuclear deterrence to erode visibly.

Another way in which nuclear deterrence is robust is that nuclear weapons are less sensitive to technical advances by

potential enemies, possibly reducing pressure for arms races. Advances in nuclear weapons by a potential adversary do not necessarily decrease the effectiveness of our own. Advances in defenses, such as a ballistic missile defense or improved submarine detection, may require adjustments to our deterrent forces, but since nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction, their overall effectiveness does not depend on easily negated incremental advantages. (On the other hand, a minimal stockpile of very few strategic weapons would become vulnerable to advances in defenses.) At present stockpile levels, it is relatively easy for the United States to maintain a secure and effective second-strike capability.

By virtue of their enormous destructive potential, the possession of nuclear weapons creates a quantum increase in power and influence for the United States. Possession creates a threshold of antagonism which no nation can cross. Global awareness of the existence of this threshold allows the United States to exercise influence without the threshold ever being approached. Just as important, the opposite is also true: stigmatizing and minimizing our nuclear weapons can undermine, to some extent, our international status and therefore our ability to influence world events and to protect and promote our interests.

This is important because it matters which states exercise power in the world. (Suppose Nazi Germany had won World War II or the Soviet Union had won the Cold War.) The collapse of the Soviet Union leaves the United States as the only major power whose national identity is defined by a set of universal political and economic values.[11] Sustained US power is central to the future of freedom, democracy, open economies, and international order in the world.

Some argue that economic strength alone can confer superpower status because economic powers can use trade and economic policies to promote their economic welfare.[12] However, economic power is only one contributor to a nation's overall power. The highest priorities of the United States government are to protect our central security interests. Economic power alone cannot guarantee security; in fact, greater economic interests may extend the boundaries of our security interests, thereby increasing our vulnerability to coercion or adding new opportunities for others to try to influence US foreign policy. The greatest contribution of economic power to security is that economic resources allow for the fielding of a formidable military force. This is why there is a great deal of concern over China's economic growth: not primarily because of China's future ability to trade effectively (although this also may be of great concern), but because of its rapid growth in military spending and the enormous resources potentially available for its military. Even states that could not compete economically have been superpowers (e.g., the Soviet Union).

The possession of a robust nuclear arsenal confers real diplomatic advantages on the United States. It is a vital symbol and part of the substance of our world leadership. Diplomacy is always performed against the backdrop of military capability. In addition, nuclear weapons, and the threats they imply, can be used explicitly (although not without risk) to protect US interests.[13] For example, during the superpower confrontation caused by the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, increased US alert status, including nuclear forces, and hints of "incalculable consequences" probably helped to deter Soviet intervention in Egypt. (Soviet nuclear capabilities also may have helped to motivate the United States to work to prevent the destruction of the encircled Egyptian Third Army.) There has been widespread speculation that allusions to nuclear use may have deterred Iraq from using chemical weapons in the 1990-91 Gulf War. And, the US carefully refrained for several days from ruling out a nuclear strike against a Libyan underground chemical weapons facility to increase the diplomatic pressure to stop construction.

Nuclear weapons make it easier for the United States to cooperate with other nations since they make it difficult for other nations to threaten central US security interests. In the past, it has been very important in international relations to avoid a *relative* gain by a partner in cooperation lest that relative gain translate into a shift in relative military power that threatens one of the partners. This creates a barrier to cooperation in trade, economic policy, arms control, or other activities that result in absolute economic or other gains. Nuclear weapons lower this barrier to cooperation.

On Nuclear Disarmament

Although nuclear stigma is usually presented as pragmatic, and sometimes includes only rhetorical speculation about the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, underlying disarmament motives often erupt as nonproliferation, democratization, or wishful thinking, which to some extent may be interlinked.[14] The first form is the renewed emphasis on nonproliferation. President Clinton, in his address to the United Nations, proclaimed: "I have made

nonproliferation one of our nation's highest priorities. We intend to weave it more deeply into the fabric of all of our relationships with the world's nations and institutions." A provision of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is that the nuclear weapon states will make progress toward nuclear disarmament; at the time, the current Administration appeared anxious to display apparent progress toward disarmament in response to this requirement of the NPT. The fear of proliferation may be an important element in nuclear stigma. For example, this is the reason that one popular recommendation to "reduce nuclear danger" is to end fissile material production. And, in fact, the US Secretary of Energy hailed the end of plutonium production as "progress on the path of nuclear disarmament." [15]

In "Phase Out the Bomb," Barry Blechman and Cathleen Fisher express concern that "America's continued reliance on nuclear weapons cripples its efforts to persuade others not to seek nuclear capabilities." [16] They quote General Charles Horner, who stated, "It's kind of hard to say to North Korea, 'You are a terrible people, you're developing a nuclear weapon,' when the United States has thousands of them." (The real message to North Korea should be: "You are acting like terrible people and that's *why* we can't let you develop a nuclear weapon.") As argued above, the benefits of nuclear weapons depend on the characteristics of the weapons themselves and the need for the United States to use force and the threat of force in a world where other nations will always have nuclear weapons. Thus, rhetorical attempts to "delegitimize" US nuclear weapons will fail when confronted with reality, a dangerous fact that will become obvious in the long run.

The second form of disarmament sentiment seems related to the announced US policy of *enlargement*, which seeks to increase security by increasing the number of market-oriented democracies in the world. [17] This is an appeal to the Kantian notion that liberal democracies will not go to war with each other. [18] The stigmatization of nuclear weapons may be implicit here because some also believe that democracies "do not build weapons of mass destruction to use on one another or threaten each other with" [19] or that "the 'modernist' states reject not only the use of weapons of mass destruction, but even the use of military force to settle their disputes." [20] Nuclear weapons are a critical problem for this worldview because nuclear weapons are so powerful that even small nations with a few weapons could protect their sovereignty and advance their interests without recourse to the cooperative measures that proponents of democratization assume would become natural. Even in a cooperative world rogue states could not be prevented from becoming nuclear powers without an extremely oppressive, intrusive, and totalitarian international regime, one that could not be maintained even if it could be established. Because it would be much more comfortable to face a nuclear rogue with nuclear weapons than without them, there would be a great deal of pressure for peaceful nations to rearm.

Whether or not a world full of mature democracies would be a peaceful world, a recent statistical analysis suggests that states in transition to democracy become more aggressive and war-prone and do indeed fight wars with other democracies. [21] This is a good analogy to our concerns about "reducing nuclear danger"; even if a world with zero nuclear weapons would be a safer world, a United States in transition to fewer or zero nuclear weapons is not therefore automatically a safer country.

A third form of disarmament sentiment is merely wishful thinking. McGeorge Bundy, William Crowe, and Sidney Drell introduce their book, *Reducing Nuclear Danger*, with this statement:

From the beginning of the Cold War in 1946 to its end in 1990, the US government would have rejected any offer from the gods to take all nuclear weapons off the table of international affairs. Today such an offer would deserve instant acceptance; it would remove all kinds of risks of catastrophic destruction, and it would leave us quite safe from Russian expansion. We should be free to enjoy two extraordinary strategic advantages: first, as the least threatened of major states and second, as the one state with modern conventional forces of unmatched quality. Unfortunately no one knows how to abolish nuclear weapons, but the dramatic change in what we now need from these weapons makes a great difference in the limits we can accept on the size and use of our nuclear forces, and that difference in turn affects what others can decide. [22]

At first glance, the image created of a world without nuclear weapons appears attractive. But since this fantasy cannot exist in reality, a point Bundy et al. readily admit, then it should not be used as any kind of guidance for the difficult choices to be made in US nuclear policy. However, these distinguished authors nonetheless explicitly link their considerations of the differences in US policy required by the end of the Cold War and their wish that nuclear

weapons didn't exist.

In the euphoria of greeting a New World, wishful thinking seems widespread. For example, Leslie Gelb, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, recently wrote, "For a long time to come, Russia will be a second-tier country with virtually useless nuclear arms." [23] In fact, Russia's nuclear weapons are no more or less useless than they were during the Cold War. And Blechman and Fisher assert, "If all the world were modernist, nuclear weapons would have absolutely no purpose and could already be safely eliminated." [24]

My point is certainly not to argue against encouraging nonproliferation and democracy. These favorable policies generally serve the interests of the United States and most of the other nations of the world. But democracy and nonproliferation are not primary means to achieve security. They can contribute to, but cannot be allowed to dominate unquestioned, the true end of US nuclear policy, which is to provide for the security of the United States including addressing the various risks related to nuclear weapons. The world in which all the great or nuclear powers are liberal democracies does not exist and perhaps never will. It would be unwise to risk the existence of our nation on the fragile notion that democracies will dictate international affairs and, consequently, exist in peaceful union. It is especially unwise to allow wishful thinking to guide policy. Nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented; we will have to live with them, perhaps forever. US nuclear weapons policy should not be constructed upon a mirage of disarmament sentiment.

Conclusions

There are many different kinds of danger associated with nuclear weapons, including the danger that policies which minimize and stigmatize nuclear weapons may exacerbate old threats and introduce new threats to US security. *All* choices involve risk. Stigmatizing all aspects of nuclear weapons may blind us to the extent that we overlook policies that could actually reduce the danger of war or violence to the United States and the rest of the world. This concept therefore interferes with our ability to formulate good policies to deal with national security and with the myriad issues related to nuclear weapons.

Since we absolutely cannot achieve the goal of abolishing both nuclear weapons *and* the knowledge of how to construct them, policies and actions that appear to move in that direction will always fail the test of plausibility. But since these policies and actions would be undertaken in the name of "reducing nuclear danger," they acquire a respectability that they have not earned through critical examination. This is the reason it is necessary to reject the emotional appeal reflected in Les Aspin's assertion in 1992 that, in the new era, "the burden of proof is shifting toward those who want to maintain" policies supporting US nuclear weapons and away from those who advocate "four prescriptions of the left . . . a comprehensive test ban, an end to production of fissile material . . . removal of forward-based tactical weapons, and renunciation of first use." [25] An assumption that the formulation of US security policy is biased *a priori* toward a given set of policy recommendations is exactly the problem with nuclear stigma.

The benefits of US nuclear weapons support the argument that the elimination of our nuclear weapons would not be good for the United States or for the world. These benefits include deterrence against attacks on our central security interests, a contribution to the general prevention of war, extended deterrence that protects our allies and discourages proliferation, security against technological surprise, maintenance of our superpower status, and the tangible benefits of nuclear diplomacy.

This is not to say that there are no national security problems associated with US nuclear weapons. A serious discussion that attempts to balance the dangers *and* benefits of nuclear weapons must be undertaken before dramatically altering our security policy. Wishing that nuclear weapons didn't exist will not alter the security needs of the United States or the associated nuclear problems. The United States needs to exercise wise leadership in formulating its policies and in promoting and protecting its worldwide interests. Policies of minimizing and stigmatizing the sources of our strength will only make it more difficult to lead.

NOTES

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1. For example, Barry M. Blechman and Cathleen S. Fisher, "Phase Out the Bomb," *Foreign Policy*, No. 97 (Winter 1994-95), 79-95; Selig S. Harrison, "Zero Nuclear Weapons. Zero," *The New York Times*, 15 February 1995, p. A15.
2. William J. Perry, US Secretary of Defense, speech to the Henry L. Stimson Center, 20 September 1994.
3. For example, McGeorge Bundy, William J. Crowe, Jr., and Sidney Drell, "Reducing Nuclear Danger," *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (Spring 1993), 140-55; Andrew J. Goodpaster, "Tighter Limits on Nuclear Arms: Issues and Opportunities for a New Era," Occasional Paper Series, The Atlantic Council of the United States, May 1992; Representative Les Aspin, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee, "From Deterrence to Denuking: Dealing with Proliferation in the 1990s," 18 February 1992, Section IV, "Reducing Nuclear Danger in the New Era."
4. This issue is discussed at length in George H. Quester and Victor A. Utgoff, "U.S. Arms Reductions and Nuclear Nonproliferation: The Counterproductive Possibilities," *The Washington Quarterly*, 16 (Winter 1993), 129-40. Also see Michael Mandelbaum, "Lessons of the Next Nuclear War," *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (March-April, 1995), 22-37.
5. Richard L. Wagner, former Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Atomic Energy, first pointed this out to the author.
6. Quoted by Leonard Spector, "Nuclear Posture Review," NNN Bulletin Board #537, Nuclear Nonproliferation Network News Service, 19-20 April 1994.
7. Blechman and Fisher, p. 83.
8. Malcolm Rifkind, UK Secretary of State for Defense, speech to the House of Commons, 16 November 1993. This is why Rifkind opposes a policy of no first use: "A no-first use declaration would take us out of the realm of war prevention into the realm of war limitation. That is a step that I regard as retrograde and have no wish to take."
9. Robert G. Spulak, Jr., "Strategic Sufficiency and Long-Range Precision Weapons," *Strategic Review*, 22 (Summer 1994), 31-39.
10. Most of the seminal and influential nuclear strategists were very concerned with credibility: see John Baylis and John Garnett, eds., *Makers of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). In addition, theoretical treatments identify credibility as the central issue in deterrence: for example, Robert Powell, *Nuclear Deterrence Theory: The Search for Credibility* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990).
11. See Samuel P. Huntington, "Why International Primacy Matters," *International Security*, 17 (Spring 1993), 68-83.
12. There is an interesting contrast in attempts to eliminate the nuclear source of our superpower status by relying on US economic strength to protect and promote US interests, while at the same time some policymakers and others argue that the United States has been experiencing, or is in danger of, relative economic decline.
13. For example, Barry M. Blechman and Douglas M. Hart, "The Political Utility of Nuclear Weapons," *International Security*, 7 (Summer 1982), 132-56.
14. A good discussion of the overall case against nuclear disarmament is given in Kathleen Bailey, "Why We Have to Keep the Bomb," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 51 (January-February 1995), 30-37.
15. Thomas W. Lippman, "Russia Set to Close 3 Reactors," *The Washington Post*, 17 March 1994, p. 1.
16. Blechman and Fisher, p. 79.
17. Anthony Lake, US National Security Advisor, speech at Johns Hopkins University, 21 September 1993.
18. Whether there is any valid statistical evidence for this is still under debate: for example, David E. Spiro, "The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace," *International Security*, 19 (Fall 1994), 50-86.

19. Larry Diamond, "The Global Imperative: Building a Democratic World Order," *Current History*, 93 (January 1994), 2.
 20. Blechman and Fisher, p. 81.
 21. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (May-June 1995), 79-97.
 22. McGeorge Bundy, William J. Crowe, Jr., and Sidney Drell, *Reducing Nuclear Danger: The Road Away From the Brink* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), p. 5.
 23. Leslie H. Gelb, "Quelling the Teacup Wars," *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (November-December 1994), 2-6.
 24. Blechman and Fisher, p. 86.
 25. Aspin, p. 14.
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